

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EUR-12 SSM-03 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05  
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01  
SP-02 SS-15 /066 W  
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R 251756Z JAN 78  
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4714  
USIA WASHDC  
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV  
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

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E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: PINT, EG  
SUBJECT: EGYPTIAN EDITOR'S VIEWS ON DISCUSSIONS WITH  
- BEGIN IN PARIS

1. MOUSSA SABRI, CHIEF EDITOR AKHBAR AL YOM PUBLISHING HOUSE, HAS GIVEN US HIS REACTION TO INTERVIEWS HE AND OTHER EGYPTIAN CHIEF EDITORS HAD LAST WEEK IN JERUSALEM WITH PRIME MINISTER BEGIN AND SHIMON PERES. IN CONVERSATION WITH PAO JANUARY 24, SABRI SAID EGYPTIAN EDITORS (REPRESENTING AKHBAR, AHRAM, GUMHURIYA, AKHIR SAA AND TELEVISION) WERE VERY DISAPPOINTED AND DISCOURAGED AFTER INTERVIEWS. BEGIN AFTER TWO-HOUR SESSION EXPRESSED TO THEM HIS SATISFACTION WITH USEFUL EXCHANGE WHICH "CLARIFIED MANY POINTS", BUT EGYPTIAN EDITORS AGREED AMONG THEMSELVES AFTERWARDS NOT TO PUBLISH IT BECAUSE IT WOULD BE TOO DISCOURAGING FOR EGYPTIAN PUBLIC. NEVERTHELESS, WITHIN HOURS, ISRAELI RADIO WAS REPORTING DETAILS, GIVEN TO RADIO BY BEGIN'S STAFF.

2. SABRI, WHO MANAGES ARAB WORLD'S LARGEST CIRCULATION  
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NEWSPAPER AL AKHBAR AND WRITES REGULARLY ON ITS FRONT PAGE, SAYS HE HAS RELUCTANTLY CONCLUDED THAT A PEACE SETTLEMENT WITH BEGIN IS IMPOSSIBLE. HE SAYS BEGIN'S OBJECTIVES ARE SIMPLY INCOMPATIBLE WITH ARAB REQUIREMENTS: BEGIN WANTS LAND AS WELL AS PEACE, AND ISRAELI PEOPLE ARE FULLY BEHIND HIM. PERES, SAID SABRI, HAS DIFFERENT STYLE BUT IN THE END HIS GOALS ARE THE SAME, SO THE PERES

ALTERNATIVE OFFERS NO HOPE EITHER.

3. IN ADDITION, SABRI IS DISTRESSED BY BEGIN'S NEGOTIATING TACTICS, WHICH HE BELIEVES STAND IN WAY OF PROGRESS TOWARD RESOLUTION OF CONFLICT. SABRI IS CONVINCED BEGIN IS DISHONEST, SAYING FIRST ONE THING AND DENYING IT LATER. SABRI GAVE SEVERAL EXAMPLES: ONE WAS BEGIN'S DENIAL THAT ISRAEL WANTED RECOGNITION. ANOTHER WAS THAT IN DECEMBER 18 CBS-TV INTERVIEW, BEGIN HAD SAID SUPPORT FOR SELF-RULE WAS "SYNONYMOUS WITH" SELF-DETERMINATION, BUT IN LAST WEEK'S MEETING WITH EGYPTIAN EDITORS, BEGIN DENIED EVER AGREEING TO SELF-DETERMINATION. SABRI ALSO CRITICIZED BEGIN FOR QUOTING SADAT'S PRIVATE REMARKS TO HIM. FOR EXAMPLE, BEGIN QUOTED SADAT AS SAYING "ENTIRE PLO LEADERSHIP ARE SOVIET AGENTS." SADAT MAY HAVE SAID THAT TO BEGIN, SABRI SAYS, BUT THIS GROSS BREACH OF CONFIDENCE SHOWS NO REGARD EITHER FOR NEGOTIATING RULES OR ARAB SENSITIVITIES.

4. SABRI SAID ISRAELI TACTIC SEEMS TO BE TO STALL WHILE IMPACT OF SADAT TRIP TO JERUSALEM FADES, AS APPROACHING U.S. BI-ELECTIONS WILL MAKE IT MORE DIFFICULT FOR U.S. TO EXERT PRESSURE. IN RESPONSE TO COMMENT THAT COMPLEX NEGOTIATIONS ON LONG-STANDING DISPUTE WILL TAKE TIME, SABRI SAID HE UNDERSTOOD ARGUMENT, AND IN HIS NEWSPAPER EDITORIALS HE WAS COUNSELING PATIENCE, BUT HE HONESTLY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THOUGHT OPPORTUNITY FOR SETTLEMENT WAS SLIPPING AWAY FAST. HE SAID RIGHT NOW IS TIME FOR U.S. TO PLAY DECISIVE ROLE, BUT WASHINGTON WAS PULLING BACK, TRYING TO REMAIN "NEUTRAL". SABRI CRITICIZED U.S. FOR VACILLATING, NOT BEING CLEAR ON WHAT WE WANTED. HOW CAN PALESTINIANS HAVE "HOMELAND" WITHOUT A STATE, HE ASKED. IN RESPONSE TO ATTEMPT AT EXPLANATION OF U.S. POLICY, SABRI SAID CAREFULLY-CHOSEN US LANGUAGE, INCLUDING PRESIDENT CARTER'S STATEMENT AT ASWAN, WAS MERELY CONFUSING. IF US REALLY BELIEVES ISRAELIES SHOULD WITHDRAW FROM ALL OCCUPIED TERRITORIES AND COMPLY WITH RESOLUTION 242, WE SHOULD SAY SO AND NOT FUDGE ISSUE. WASHINGTON SEEMED INDECISIVE JUST AT MOMENT WHEN COURAGEOUS STAND IS NECESSARY.

5. BELIEVE HIS COMMENTS ACCURATELY REFLECT DEEP FRUSTRATIONS OF EGYPTIAN ESTABLISHMENT WITH BEGIN, AND INCREASING TENDENCY TO LOOK TO WASHINGTON FOR DECISIVE ACTION. EILTS

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 jan 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** PRESS CONFERENCES, POLITICAL LEADERS  
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**TAGS:** PINT, SOPN, EG, (BEGIN, MENAHEM)  
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**Type:** TE  
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**Review Markings:**  
Sheryl P. Walter  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
20 Mar 2014  
**Markings:** Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014